

Hills council considers upgrading stable's condition

**BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER**

History and the buildings that stand the test of time, can be an indication of stability.

But an historic building in Farmington Hills is anything but stable even though it is a stable. The city council and staff are considering what to do with the building, which would cost a lot of money just to keep standing, much less to restore it to its proper condition.

"To do the very basic stabilization would cost \$100,000," Dan Potter, the city's director of special services told the city council Aug. 19.

"Architect Leon Kohls said about \$13,000 worth of stabilization would keep it from falling for the time being."

The stable, which became part of the city's historic district in November of 1984, is on the grounds of Heritage Park. The city applied for a state Equity Grant of \$50,000, which required a

city match of \$50,000, but was turned down. Instead, the state offered the city \$10,000 in grant money if the city put up \$50,000.

Potter said former City Manager Bill Costick was reluctant to pursue the project under these terms and so the city applied for a six-month extension of the grant offer until either another plan could be pursued or the city council decided to take the smaller grant.

Potter said that in the meantime, \$13,000-\$16,000 would be enough to make sure the stable would not collapse.

"To turn this thing around, we need more than a one-to-five match," Potter said.

The building's problems are considerable. Potter said architects have found major deficiencies. The footings are "starting to float" which is making the roof sag and puts the floor on different levels, he said.

In 1986, architect Mike Kirk found the building to be in "fair to poor condition." An Ad Hoc Farm

Committee recommended in 1992 that the city try to save the building.

When the city applied for the \$100,000 grant, Potter said that would cover the restoration of the outside. The inside improvements could be done over time, he said.

Council members and City Manager Daniel Hobbs said they were concerned that \$100,000 might still not be enough to fully restore the building.

They also wondered how much good it would do to spend any money rather than to solve the problem long range.

Hobbs called a one-to-five match "a terrible way to do business."

Councilman Jerry Ellis said he would like to see a firm figure before the city spends "dollar one" on the project.

"Let's decide what we are going to use it for," he said. "We started with the Spicer House at \$500,000 and ended up spending \$1 million. Let's

not get into a bottomless pit situation."

But Councilman Terry Sever said the city needs to make it a commitment to restore the building even if it means taking less grant money or doing it without outside help.

"I think we should save the facility and stop stretching it out," Sever said. "Let's make the \$100,000 commitment or let's tear it down and get over the issue."

Sever said the council needs to commit the money and do a proper analysis. If need be, the city could budget money in the next parks and recreation millage request, he said.

Hobbs said the council should not worry about the \$10,000 in grant money when making a decision.

"I suggest that you not let the \$10,000 grant drive how you all want to do business," he said. "Let's do it on our terms, not on the state time frame."

Hills woman extended helping hand to seniors

Fanny Hill, in the words of a colleague, was a success in her work with senior citizens because "... she did more than she had to. She extended herself."

Those were the words of Loretta Conway, who runs the senior adult programs in Farmington Hills, about Mrs. Hill, who established and expanded a nutrition program for Farmington-area senior citizens.

Mrs. Hill died Aug. 26 at Dorvin Nursing Home, Livonia,

at age 86.

A Farmington Hills resident since 1956, Mrs. Hill had been nutrition director for many years at the Farmington Hills Merion Center and was involved in the Meals on Wheels program.

"Fanny was a kind and caring woman," said Conway. "She was deeply loved by the people who came in here for lunch and by the homebound, not to mention by the drivers (in the Meals on Wheels program)."

Mrs. Hill, who came to the United States from England in 1920, started helping seniors with the Oakland-Livingston Human Services Agency in the late 1970s.

When Farmington Hills received a grant to establish its own senior program, complete

with kitchen, in the 1980s, Mrs. Hill went there to establish and supervise the volunteer preparation and delivery of food.

Today, the program serves more than 100 seniors at the center on 11 Mile Road, and also delivers hundreds of meals to homebound seniors through the Meals on Wheels program.

Mrs. Hill enjoyed cooking and was a member of Shepherd King Lutheran Church.

She is survived by her husband of 61 years, Kenneth, who worked with her on the senior meals program; brothers Fred and Franklin Cameron; sister Shirley DeLeon and many nieces and nephews.

SERVICES will be at 10 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 29, at Shepherd King Lutheran Church, 5300 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield, the Rev. Dennis G. Fitzpatrick officiating. Burial will be in Roseland Park Cemetery, Berkley.

Memorials may be made to the church or to the Michigan Cancer Foundation, 18831 W. 12 Mile Road, Lathrup Village 48076-9806.

JILL E. HORN

Mrs. Horn, 57, of Northville, died Aug. 23 in Oakwood Commons, Dearborn.

Born in Detroit, Mrs. Horn was a homemaker. She was a Stephen Minister at Grace Chapel Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Farmington Hills. She was also a member of Ward Evangelical Presbyterian

Church in Livonia.

Mrs. Horn was an avid cat lover and had also worked at Cranbrook Academy. In 1972, she had a kidney transplant donated to her by her brother.

Survivors include her husband, William; stepsons, Daniel and Thomas; brother, Jack Edington.

Services were at Grace Chapel Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Dr. Gil H. Odendaal officiated. Burial was in Forest Hill Cemetery in Ann Arbor. Memorials may be made to National Kidney Foundation.

LEONE L. VAN EESBECK

Mrs. Eesbeck, 98, of Farmington Hills, died Aug. 23.

Born in France, Mrs. Eesbeck was a homemaker.

Survivors include one grandson; friends, Don and Jean

STEPHANIE JOSEPHINE ZBOCH

Mrs. Zboch, 89, of Farmington, died Aug. 24 in Oakwood Hospital, Dearborn.

Born in New Castle, Pennsylvania, Mrs. Zboch was a homemaker.

Survivors include her son, Gerald; daughter, Audrey; sisters, Helen Crowley, Marie Grege and Winifred Chive; brother, Stanley Fitch; six grandchildren.

Mass was celebrated Aug. 28 in Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church. The Rev. Loren O'Dea officiated. Burial was in St. Hedwig Cemetery, Dearborn Heights.

Memorials may be made to Detroit Catholic Central.

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